(c) whether bilateral trade between India and Russia stands at $ 3.15 billion and is not commensurate with level of political engagements between the two countries; and

(d) if so, what are the other steps considered to be taken to strengthen economic ties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir. A proposal to set up a Joint Study Group is under consideration.

(b) No sector have been specifically identified yet.

(c) Indo-Russia bilateral trade in the last two financial years are as follows:

2003-04	USD 1673.39 million
2004-05	USD 1862.81 million

There is scope for further strengthening of trade ties.

(d) Promotion of dialogue at the highest level, constant review through the Joint Commission/Working Group/Sub-Group mechanism, Joint Task Force, promoting direct business contacts through exchange of delegations, Joint Business Councils are some of the initiatives that are being considered to strengthen economic ties.

Amendment of IRDA Act

1404. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high power panel under Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has recommended for reaching reforms in insurance sector, including a different capital requirement for health and farm insurers;

(b) if so, whether a full report of IRDA panel head by K.P. Narasimhan has suggested that section 6 of Insurance Act of 1956 needs to be amended for providing different levels of capital for certain classes of business such as agriculture and health insurance;

(c) if so, the main features of the report; and

(d) whether Government have considered them and if so, the steps being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The Narasimhan Committee was set up by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) to deliberate on the recommendations of the Law Commission to review the Insurance Act, 1938. It has submitted its report to IRDA in July, 2005. IRDA has placed this report in the public domain for comments of all stakeholders. IRDA is yet to submit its report to Government.

Aid from Asian Development Bank

1405. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Asian Development Bank is ready to double its aid package to more than $ 2.5 billion annually to the country within next three years and also support Bharat Nirman and other infrastructure projects in various key sectors such as energy including power, rail freight corridor, roads and highways as also airways;

(b) if so, the total aid to be provided by ADB in all these sectors;

(c) whether any agreements between ADB and respective Ministries have been reached;

(d) if so, what is total amount to be provided for each project; and

(e) what is the progress so far made in completing these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE(SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Government of India and Asian Development Bank have tentatively finalized the ADB's Country Strategy Programme for 2006-2008. The ADB will make efforts to increase its lending to India from US $ 2.25 billion in 2006 to US $ 2.45 billion in 2007 to US $ 2.65 billion in 2008 should there be demand for it from the States and other Executing Agencies. The loans are in sectors identified by the Government of India to combat poverty through infrastructure-led growth. Nearly 77% of the three-year programme